

hello john

a *The Magnus Archives* rpg

(As the podcast progresses, it becomes difficult for the Archivist to stop mid-statement or be interrupted. This game ignores that, for the sake of convenience.)

The Archivist is just trying to record a statement in peace. This would be easier if everyone else would stop barging in with constant interruptions. If it's not cups of tea, it's interventions. Or worms. Or being kidnapped, or clowns, or... et cetera.

You will need:

- 2-6 people: 1 Archivist and some players
- The Magnus Archives* episode transcripts
- at least 1 six-sided dice (d6)
- a 5x5 bingo grid (p.3)
- a pencil (or a pen, or a rusty quill)
- at least some idea of what the show/episode is about

This ruleset contains spoilers for TMA s1-4.

Setup:

- Collectively pick a season of *TMA*. Archivist: suggest a statement from that season. You'll be reading the statement aloud, so before starting, read the content warnings and intro ('Statement of...'); if anyone is uncomfortable or would prefer a different statement, they can veto it.
- All: Discuss how serious/silly of a tone you're aiming for, and any group safety measures, e.g. an X card.
- Players: secretly fill out a 5x5 bingo grid with thematically-relevant words that you think will be used in the statement. Do this without looking at the text of the statement! Use nouns, verbs, adjectives (e.g. *worm*, *dark*). Avoid connectives, pronouns, or filler words (e.g. *I*, *and*).

Gameplay:

- Archivist: begin reading! Only read the statement portion of the episode, no pre- or post-statement dialogue, and skip any canon interruptions.
- Players: listen to the statement (providing improvised soundscape/foley as desired). When the Archivist says a word that's on your grid, cross it off, knock on the table and interrupt.
- To interrupt: roll 1d6 on the *Who?* table, then the *Why?* table (p.2). Roleplay a scene with the Archivist, as that character interrupting for that reason. Once you've made your exit again, the Archivist resumes reading the statement.
- If multiple players interrupt on the same word, everyone involved rolls *Who?*, rerolling any overlaps. Then roll one collective *Why?*, and play out the scene.
- Scenes have no obligation to be canon-compliant in plot events, characterisation, or tone.

End of game:

- If any player gets bingo (crossing off five in a row), the statement is completely derailed. The Archivist stops reading. The player who got bingo rolls 1d6 and consults the *What now?!* table (p.2) to determine what's going on.
- Starting with the player who got bingo and going clockwise, players each choose a character from the *Who?* table to roleplay as for the final scene.
- Roleplay the scene as a group. When the person who got bingo feels the time is right, they may 'turn off the tape recorder', ending the scene and the game. (This can be a cliffhanger.)
- If nobody gets bingo, the Archivist rolls *What Now?!* after the statement has concluded, and decides when to turn off the tape recorder.

Rules quibbles:

Plurals count: *spider* may be crossed off for *spiders*, etc.
Different tenses and conjugations of verbs count: *ran* for *runs*, *running*, etc.
Different names for the same Fear count: *Eye* for *Beholding*, etc.
Proper nouns count as one word even if they're made up of multiple words. *The Magnus Institute* is one square, not three.
Your group can decide its own stance on what 'counts' as a word.
Change any of these suggestions if you feel like it.

Free choice:

Rolling a 6 on the *Who?* table lets you choose any character you want for your scene. This includes any of the characters listed on the *Who?* table, or any other character you can think of. Your choice is not limited to characters that canonically appear in the season you're playing, but if it's someone the Archivist hasn't met before, make sure to introduce yourself, and if it's someone who ought to be dead/absent/on a kayaking trip, have them explain how it is that they're here.

S1

Who?

1	Martin
2	Tim
3	Sasha
4	Elias
5	Jane Prentiss
6	Free choice

Why?

1	Tea
2	Research results
3	Criticism
4	I live here now
5	Sinister pronouncement
6	Worms

What now?!

1	LOTS of worms
2	We're trapped!
3	Lost in the tunnels
4	Someone is injured
5	Artefact Storage mishaps
6	Finding a body

Who?

1	Martin
2	Tim
3	NotSasha
4	Basira
5	Michael (Distortion)
6	Free choice

Why?

1	Murder suspicions
2	Offer of assistance
3	New information
4	Intervention
5	Dramatic irony/gloating
6	What's in the tunnels

What now?!

1	Axe time
2	NotThem confrontation
3	Distortion hallways
4	Return your library books
5	Who lives in the tunnels?!
6	Brutal pipe murder

S2

Who?

1	Martin
2	Tim
3	Basira
4	Melanie
5	Georgie
6	Free choice

Why?

1	Friendly chat
2	Angry at someone
3	Circus lore
4	Backstory reveal
5	Planning something
6	Kidnapping

What now?!

1	Setting things on fire
2	Yet another murder attempt
3	Arrested
4	Wax museum party
5	Really big explosion
6	Comatose

S3

Who?

1	Martin
2	Basira
3	Melanie
4	Daisy
5	Peter Lukas
6	Free choice

Why?

1	The fifteenth Fear
2	How to quit
3	Archivist powers
4	Pining
5	Wild goose chase
6	Archivist interrupts you

What now?!

1	Played like a cheap whistle
2	Hunters
3	A very foggy beach
4	Scottish safehouse
5	Villain monologue
6	Literally ending the world

S4

		free  space		

Credits:

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 Find me on Twitter @motagonist—please get in touch with any questions/feedback!
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